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[For information on the topography, climate, agriculture and commercial crops, irrigation, stock raising, natural resources, production and supply, waterways, railways, and roads of the valleys of the Tigris and Euphrates between the plateau of Asia Minor and the Persian Gulf, discussed as one geographical unit, rather than by political boundary, see, M1 Middle East, cat. 116, 21: Fisher, pp. 340-370.]

[For information on the topography, climate, agriculture, mineral wealth, railways, settlement pattern, productive capacity of the economy, and trade of the Levant coastland, see M1 Middle East, cat. 116, 21: Fisher, pp. 371-414.]

[For information on the topography, occupations and relative productivity of the desert plateau, and of the Arabian Peninsula as a whole, see M1 Middle East, cat. 116, 21:Fisher, pp. 427-449.]

452 plantation and the value of his lands. Lands without title have no commercial value though the farmer may use them without opposition. This is apparent at the present time when lands with title and undisputed boundaries sell at ten times the price of occupied lands without title A survey and cadastration of Jazirah lands with a rapid and form settlement of boundary disputed and the grant of property deeds will expand the borrowing capacities of Jazirah enonously and may tend to reduce the exorbitant rates of interest demanded by the money lenders. On such a trable basis, other banking establishments may be induced to open business in the region and relieve its dependance on the greedy money lender.

COMMUNICATION AND TRANSPORTATION

491 During the French Mandate there was not a single paved or asphalted road in Jazirah. In winter road communications were out
● 496 between the different towns and villages and the only means of travel was by train which passed through the more important centers of Qamishli, Amuda and Dirbassiya For the rest of the year road transport became possible but expensive because of the absence of roads For this reason, the whole region of Deirik remained undeveloped until quite recently.

I. Roads Within Jazirah

491 The independent Government in Syria started building a
653 road in 1945 between Qamishli and Hassakeh which served at the same time as the arterial road to Aleppo. Though the distance between the two towns is only 85 kilometers, the funds alloted yearly for the road were so small that now, after seven years, only about 30 kilometers are asphalted and the rest is paved The maintenance does not keep up with the deterioration and the road is going to pieces. However, now at last, communication is assured in all weather while before trucks were stuck for days during the rainy season.

Another asphalted road joins Qamishli with Amuda, a distance of 30 kilometers. Here again deterioration is rapid. This road is to be projected another 30 kilometers to Dirbassiya and from there to Ras el Ain, a distance of 60 kilometers.

491 The road Qamishli-Hassakeh is extended for 50 kilometers south to Point 47 on the way to Deir Ezzor. This section is also asphalted.

III The Baghdad Railway

The Baghdad Railway which runs 247 kilometers in Syria is 496
the principal means of transport for goods. It handles about 200,000 648
tons of goods every year. The bulk of Jazirah wheat is transported over it. But it has had in recent years keen competition from trucks in spite of the bad roads for several reasons. The Qamishli-Aleppo line passes for 70% of its length through Turkish territory and is under Turkish control. When the Turks choose to irritate the Syrians they restrict the entrance to the stations and in numerous other ways frustrate the Syrians and cause them hardship. Whole trains are unaccountably delayed for days in the Turkish stations.

Already passenger traffic is handled almost entirely by planes, 484
cars and busses, except in winter months when the roads are unsafe. A bus charges LS 10 from Qamishli to Aleppo and makes the trip in 12 hours. A small car charges LS 20 and makes the trip in 8 hours. It takes the "Express" 20-22 hours to reach Aleppo from Qamishli and the fare is LS 30 in second-class "wagon lit" with tips.

For merchandise the train rate is LS 23. 5 per ton from Qamishli 489
to Aleppo. It costs the farmer an additional LS 6-12 depending on the distance to transport a ton of wheat from the field to the station. There is also an amount of about LS 4 involved in handling, all of which makes the actual rate by train about LS 35.

The truck charges LS 35 from Qamishli to Aleppo during the wheat season but it carries the wheat directly from the combine in the field to the merchant's store in Aleppo thus reducing the handling expenses to a minimum and transporting the goods in the shortest time. If the farmer is not hard pressed for money, which is rather rare, and can wait until the winter months and spring, he can transport his wheat for a rate as low as LS 10-15 per ton by truck. Inversely, the cost of tranport from Aleppo to Jazirah rises in winter and spring and decreases in summer and autumn.

Though truck transport is more advantageous in many ways than transport by train, the number of trucks available and the condition of the roads make the transport of a whole crop by trucks impossible. To achieve that, a complete road network needs to be constructed, diesel trucks would have to be imported and the discriminatory tariffs against them abolished.

617 that process which has been going on since the beginning of
221 history. But in the steppe and desert country where pasturing
621 is possible and cultivation impossible, the Beduin still have an important part to play.

3

162 Approximately one-third of the population lives in towns.
361 There are three towns, Beirut, Damascus and Aleppo, with between 200,000 and 300,000 inhabitants each; five others —Homs, Hama, Tripoli, Latakia and Dair az-Zur—with between 20,000 and 100,000. The inhabitants are mainly occupied in commerce and industry.

433 The structure of industry is changing more rapidly than that of agriculture. A two-fold change is taking place. On the one hand, the traditional textile, metal and other industries, which used to supply the needs of a great part of Ottoman Asia and the Arabian peninsula, are being killed by the Westernization of taste and by the competition of cheap Western and Japanese goods. On the other, modern industries are slowly being created, especially in the three principal towns, Damascus, Aleppo and Beirut. Their development has been hampered by paucity of raw materials, the scarcity of capital and to a lesser extent of technical skill, competition from Europe, America and lately from Japan, the smallness of the internal and the absence of an external market. The modern industrial equipment of the country is still confined to a small number of factories for foodstuffs, textile goods and certain other products for the internal market. The silk industry of Lebanon, which was important until it was overwhelmed by foreign competition and the introduction of artificial silk, has had a partial revival during the last few years.

Not only the industrial but the whole economic development of the country is handicapped by inadequate communications. There is only one modern port, Beirut, which has been developed by French capital and enterprise, and through which flows the bulk of the country's external trade. Tripoli is important as the terminus of one branch of the oil pipe-line from Iraq, but it does not yet possess adequate harbour-
496 works; Latakia is small and undeveloped. The railway system, mainly built and administered by a French concessionary company, includes only a little over a thousand
497 kilometres of track. Passengers and goods are carried

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T U R K E Y
S Y R I A
I R A Q
A R A B I A
PALESTINE
TRANSJORDAN
HAMAD
Aleppo
Homs
Damascus
Tripoli
Latakia
Deir ez Zor
Palmyra
Haditha
Rutba
Amman
Maan
HAURAN
Qasaba Hama
Qasaba Homs
Jebel Druse
Mediterranean Sea
SYRIA: the Campaign of 1941 8th June — 15th July
SCALE:— Km.
Roads & Tracks
Main Railways

T U R K
HATAY
A L E P P O
E U P H
HAMA
LATAKIA
H O M S
D A M A S C U S
JEBEL DRUZE
TRANSJORD

END MAP (A)

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L
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436
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END MAP (B)

14:International Bank S-5 (1954) 1955 MD1 Syria MD1

489 modest quantities of goods between Beirut and Baghdad. Above all, most of the foreign trade of Jordan flows through Syria to and from Beirut.

1 EXISTING TRANSPORT FACILITIES

A brief inventory of the principal transport facilities is an essential preliminary to a discussion of the problems and methods of coping with them.

496 *The Railways*[28]

Three railways operate in Syria—the Northern Railway, the Hedjaz Railway and the DHP (Chemin de Fer Damas, Hama et Prolongements).

The Northern Railway is the Syrian section of that international railway which achieved fame as the Berlin-Baghdad Railway. Coming from Baghdad and Mosul in Iraq, it traverses a portion of northeastern Syria from Tell Kotchek to Kamichliye, then enters Turkey, proceeding just along the boundary until it turns south to Aleppo and finally once again north to Turkey where one branch runs to the port of Iskenderun and the other to Istanbul. The Syrian sections are owned by the government and managed by a Director of Railways and Council Administration under the Ministry of Public Works. Out of approximately 400,000 tons of cargo carried in 1952, the Northern Railway transported about 101,000 tons for Iraq, mostly in transit, and some 106,000 tons, principally grain and coal, in transit for Turkey. Although the traffic is modest, the development of agricultural production in the Syrian Jezireh and the adjoining portions of Turkey have been instrumental in raising it from about 22 million ton-kilometers in 1938 to 55 million in 1953.

[465]

The Northern Railway links at Aleppo with the DHP, operated by a private French company under an 1893 concession and serving both Syria and Lebanon. The DHP system consists of both narrow- and standard-gauge lines. The most important standard-gauge line runs from Aleppo via Hama and Homs to the Lebanese port of Tripoli and thence along the Lebanese coast. Aside from agricultural commodities produced in the Homs-Hama region, it carries the bulk of transit traffic to and from Iraq coming over the Northern Railway. It also carries Syrian cereals and

[28] See Annex H, p. 425.

14:International Bank S-5 (1954)1955 MD1 Syria MD1

other products to Lebanon, imported raw sugar for processing at the Homs refinery, and, to some extent, petroleum products from the oil refinery at Tripoli. At Homs another standard-gauge line runs south into Lebanon to Rayak where it links up with the DHP's narrow-gauge railway connecting Beirut with Damascus. For Syria this narrow-gauge line has little economic importance; it handles transit traffic for Jordan almost exclusively. In 1952 it carried approximately 129,000 tons compared to 385,000 tons for the standard-gauge portion of the system, and of this total well over 100,000 tons was for Jordanian account. The DHP transports more passengers than either of the other two railways, but most of this is local traffic and in recent postwar years, in terms of passenger-kilometers, it has been only 11% to 17% of prewar levels.

At Damascus the DHP narrow-gauge line joins the narrow-gauge railway of the Hedjaz which runs south to Amman, the Jordanian capital, and some distance beyond. The Hedjaz Railway is a *waqf* or Moslem religious endowment, administered by the Syrian government through the agency of a director-general and a Council of Administration responsible to the Prime Minister. It was built to handle the pilgrim traffic and originally ran over a distance of 3,159 kilometers to Medina in Saudi Arabia. During the first World War most of the line was dismantled and has never been rebuilt. In January 1954, however, Syria, Jordan and Saudi Arabia reached an agreement to reconstruct the entire line to Medina, with Saudi Arabia apparently undertaking to finance the greater part of the cost. Despite the disruption of the rail connection with the Moslem Holy Places, pilgrim traffic over the Hedjaz Railway has shown a tendency to revive in recent years, because the Syrian government has come to the rescue of the railway by prohibiting pilgrimages by sea from Latakia, and steps have been taken to organize the transport of pilgrims by sea from the Jordanian port of Aqaba to Jidda. The goods traffic of the railway is, as in the case of the Damascus-Beirut line, almost all transit trade for Jordan. In fact, the volume of Syrian goods transported internally represents less than 10% of the total.

The nadir of traffic on all the Syrian railways combined was reached in 1949 and 1950. In recent years there has been a recovery, but the volume of goods traffic handled in 1953 barely reached prewar levels, while passenger traffic was only about one-third of the prewar volume.[27] It is scarcely surprising, therefore, that the railways should be operating at a deficit. The

[27] See Annex H, p. 427.

14:International Bank S-5 (1954) 1955 MD1 Syria MD1

496 Syrian government has been sharing the deficit of the DHP Railway with the Lebanese government on a fifty-fifty basis and also defraying the losses of the Hedjaz and Northern Railways. Government outlays on this account have been rising—from an average of £S 641,000 in 1950-52 to an estimated £S 750,000 in 1953 and £S 1,209 million in 1954. Unfortunately a further substantial increase must be anticipated. The Turkish government is expected to complete in 1955 or 1956 a railway shortcut which will make it unnecessary for export grain produced in southern Turkey, as well as other commodities, to transit through Syria on the way to Iskenderun. This will probably mean an annual loss in gross revenues of a little over £S 2 million for the Northern Railway. Even though the loss may be partially offset by a decline in operating expenses and it may prove feasible to recoup some revenue by increasing freight rates for Syrian goods, it is probable that the government will have to meet an additional deficit of at least £S 1 million a year.

Besides these operating subventions to the railways, the government will apparently be spending some £S 5 million for the acquisition of the Syrian portions of the DHP network. Negotiations for the purchase of these lines and a corresponding amount of rolling stock have been in [455] progress for some time and will probably be completed before long. They were dictated partly by the government's desire to own all the railways on Syrian soil and partly by its belief that Syrian operation would result in economies, particularly by reduction of overhead expenses. The latter objective may well be realized for the standard-gauge lines which are to be incorporated into the Northern Railway. It is more doubtful that significant economies will be achieved by taking over the Syrian portion of the narrow-gauge Damascus-Beirut line, which should logically be turned over to the Hedjaz Railway for operation.

In view of the rather low volume of traffic and the deficit character of the railway operation, the mission has considered whether it would not be advisable to abandon certain railway lines, particularly the Beirut-Damascus and Hedjaz Railways. For a number of reasons we have concluded that such a course would be unwise. Abandonment of the Beirut-Damascus line would increase by about 5-10% truck traffic on the parallel road, which is already becoming overburdened. Local passenger traffic would also have to be transferred to the road. It has already been pointed out that the two lines mentioned serve primarily as a transit artery for Jordan; their closing might therefore seriously affect the Jordanian econ-

14:International Bank S-5 (1954)1955 MD1 Syria MD1

omy. True, Jordanians have frequently complained of Syrian government regulations which, in an effort to support the Hedjaz Railway, have prohibited transit traffic by truck of most goods. While some categories of goods, notably perishables and petroleum products, are exempt from this prohibition, there is little doubt that more traffic would move by road if the prohibition were entirely lifted. At the same time, Jordan may be able to import and export some bulky commodities more advantageously by rail; Jordan's own port an the Gulf of Akaba has no rail connection and is by no means as advantageously situated with respect to trade with Europe as Beirut. In the circumstances, we would suggest that the subject of transit and the relationship of the rail lines thereto be fully and frankly discussed by representatives of the Jordanian, Syrian and Lebanese governments. Their common interest in the maintenance of the railway lines and the possibilities of more efficient and economical operation can then be thoroughly examined. It may be feasible to reduce operating costs by agreed economies and to raise revenues through certain selective increases in freight rates. In some respects, for instance, freight rates on the Hedjaz Railway seem to be lower than those on the DHP line. In the long run it appears unwise to make shippers support the railway by insisting that they use it for transport of certain commodities. If the railway must be maintained owing to considerations which are partly non-economic, it would be better to have the governments concerned share the entire deficit resulting from its continued operation.

Road Transport[28]

With traffic on the railways no greater than prewar, it is apparent that motor transport has captured all of the substantial increase in the amount of goods produced and traded in the Syrian economy over the last decade and a half. The Syrian road network increased from 4,500 kilometers in 1939 to 8,200 in 1952, and the length of hard-surface (macadam and asphalt) from 1,500 to 3,800 kilometers. This includes only so-called "all-weather" roads; with the addition of those not traversable in the wet season the total length is over 10,000 kilometers. The number of motor vehicles of all kinds on the roads rose from 3,736 in 1939 to 13,146 in 1953; the number of trucks increased from 873 to 4,742 and of buses from 348 to 1,212. In part the rapid growth of road transport was caused by the lack of adequate

[28] See Annex H, p. 436.

14:International Bank S-5 (1954) 1955 MD1 Syria MD1

As already indicated, the Jezireh is also served by the international railway which criss-crosses the frontier. It is difficult to use because the three railway administrations controlling it do not cooperate effectively, and crucial seasonal shortages of freight cars often hold up grain movements. By and large the railway assists only in the transport of commodities produced in a narrow belt along the frontier. While the railway annually transports between 150,000 and 200,000 tons of the Jezireh's agricultural output, much more moves by road.

The cost of transport across northern Syria is very burdensome and motor transport rates are subject to sharp seasonal fluctuations. In part, of course, this is caused by the unavoidably seasonal nature of the agricultural products traffic and the lack of adequate return cargo to the Jezireh. The very fact, however, that the Jezireh roads are impassable during much of the winter rainy season greatly accentuates the seasonal movement and necessitates a larger investment in trucks. Under such circumstances truck operators charge what the traffic will bear. During the harvest season it costs £S 40-50 per ton to transport grain from Kamichliye or Hassetche to Aleppo and about £S 25-30 from Ras el Ain to Aleppo. During the "dead season," such as the spring, following the rainy season, these rates are almost halved. The high rates are caused in part, of course, by the heavy maintenance and depreciation charges for trucks. On the railway the freight rate for grain from the Jezireh to Aleppo is the same the year around, about £S 25 per ton.

During most of the postwar period agricultural prices have been high, providing sufficient incentive to an expansion of production in areas remote from the port despite high transport costs. With the marked decline in prices during the last few years, however, the burden on the producers has become progressively more severe. Since transport and handling charges remained the same, they received a smaller proportion of the falling export price at the port. In 1953 transport charges of £S 50-60 per ton from the Jezireh to Latakia represented about a third of the f.o.b. export price of barley and somewhat more than a fifth of that of wheat. At the same time transport adds to the cost of production. Thus in the Jezireh gas oil for tractors and irrigation pumps is about 75-100% more expensive than at Homs and gasoline for harvesting combines is 20-25% higher.

The mission has given much thought to the question of how the transport problem in the north of Syria might most effectively be solved. Since the construction of a railway linking the Jezireh with Aleppo and Latakia

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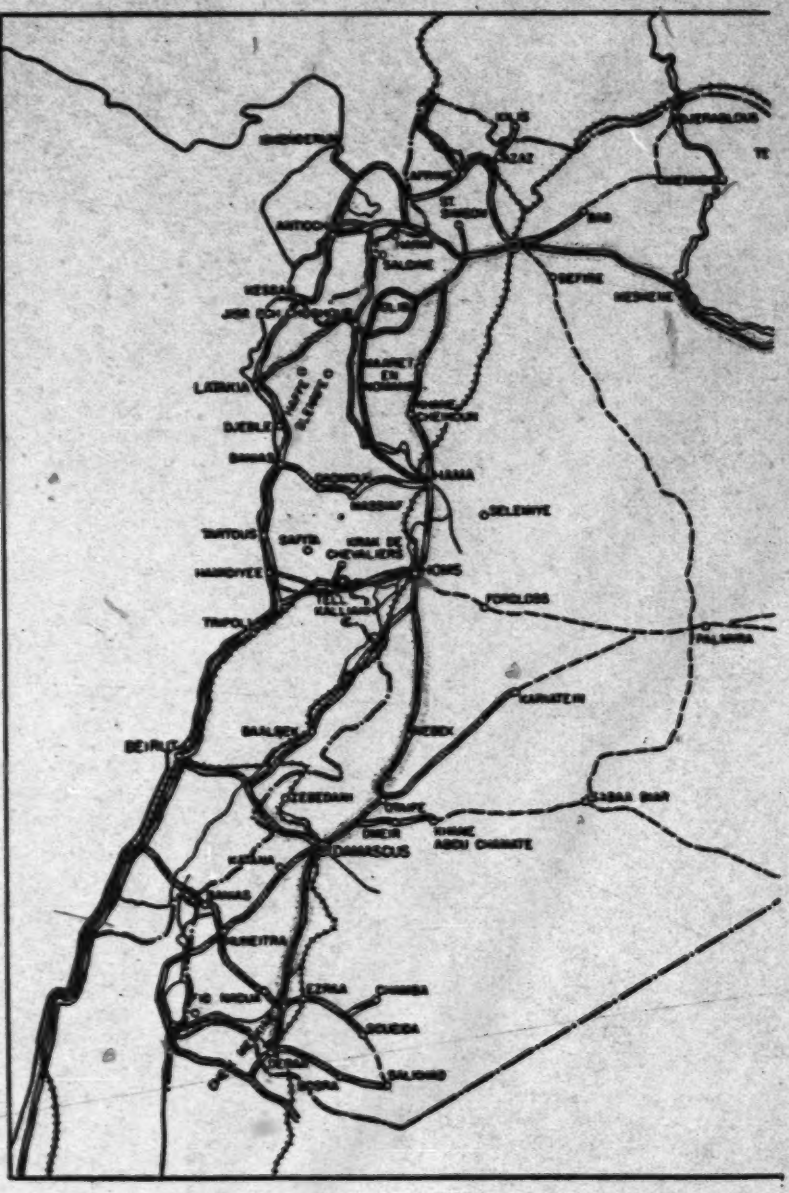

FOLLOWING P. 140(A)

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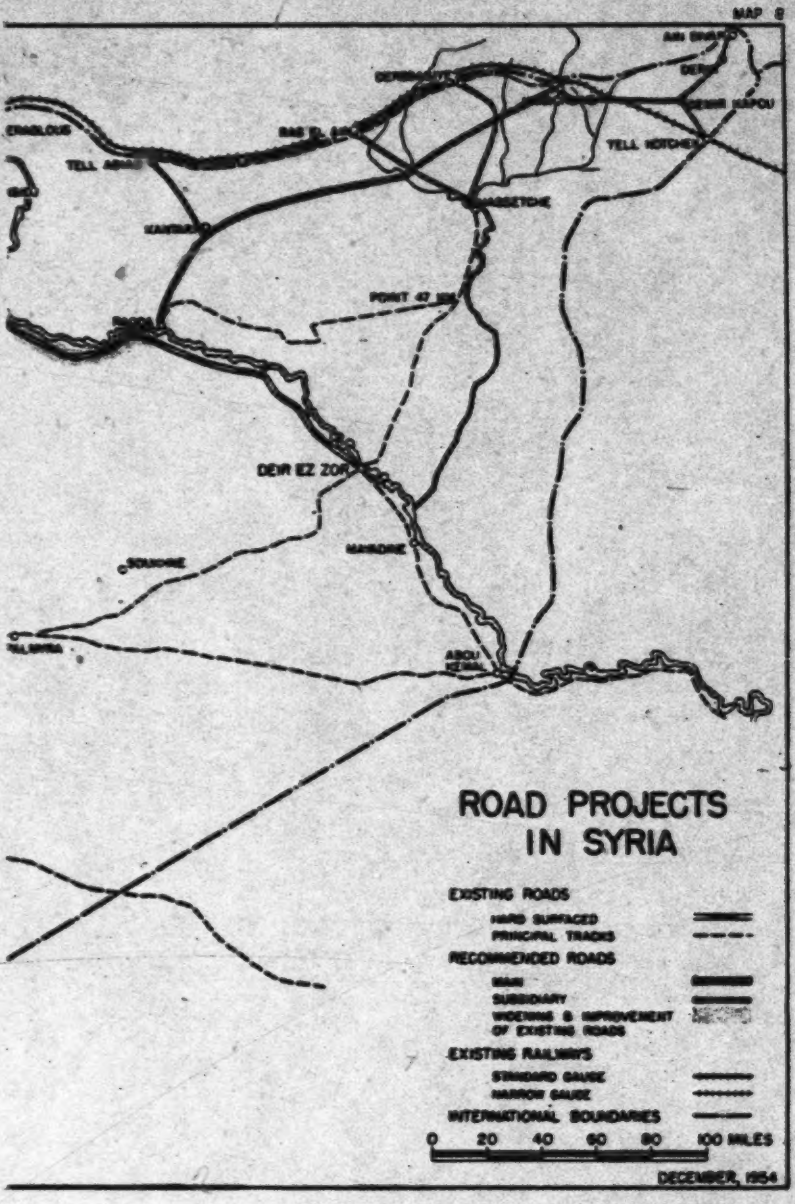

FOLLOWING P. 140 (B)

14:International Bank S-5 (1954) 1955 MD1 Syria MD1

commodities is reflected in the seasonal fluctuations of the traffic as shown in Figure 1.

The volume of passenger traffic, after reaching a record low in 1950, has also recovered slightly in recent years, as shown by Table 4. In 1953, however, it was still only a little over one-third of the prewar traffic. All of the losses have been suffered by the DHP system.

TABLE 4 Railway Transport of Passengers

(Million passenger-kilometers)

Year	DHP	Hedjaz	Northern	Total
1938	100.8	13.0	4.7	118.5
1947	40.2	7.6	10.1	57.9
1948	38.8	7.5	5.2	51.5
1949	17.0	7.6	5.1	29.7
1950	11.2	5.4	5.3	21.9
1951	12.5	6.0	6.3	24.8
1952	13.4	10.6	5.8	29.8
1953	16.2	15.2	5.6	37.0
1953 as % of 1938	16.0%	116.7%	119.3%	31.2%

C RAILWAY PROPOSALS

Conversion of Gauges

Several proposals aimed at unification of the rail network have involved the conversion of narrow-gauge lines to standard width. A 1907 project called for standard-gauge construction from Beirut to Rayak, with a 5,360-meter tunnel near Hammana, at a cost of 61 million gold francs. Rejected because of its expense, this scheme was revived in 1932 in connection with a proposed electrification. A similar scheme, but with a shorter tunnel (3,985 meters), envisaged a standard-gauge line from Beirut to Damascus, whose cost today would be at least £L 140 million.

In 1945 the Syrian government studied the possibility of adding a third rail to the narrow-gauge line from Rayak to Damascus and found the cost to be £S 18 million to £S 23 million. An alternative Damascus-Homs railway through Syrian territory, via Kariatein and Forqloss, was esti-

14:International Bank S-5 (1954) 1955 MD1 Syria MD1

496 mated to cost about £S 36 million and was preferred, but neither project was carried out. There have also been proposals for converting the Hedjaz Railway to standard gauge as far as the border (£S 11 million) and for building an entirely new line south of Damascus at a cost of about £S 34 million.

It is difficult to justify the cost of any of these projects today on the basis of traffic analysis. At present the most important freight movement over the narrow-gauge lines is between Beirut and Jordan, and for this reason the conversion of any part of the system without the rest would only create an obstacle. For pilgrim traffic the same is true, especially in view of current plans to restore the Hedjaz line to Medina. Indeed, the mission feels that when the government acquires the DHP system it may prove more advantageous to turn its narrow-gauge trackage over to the connecting Hedjaz Railway as a natural extension of that line.

Electrification

On a number of occasions it has been asked whether electrification of the Syrian railroads would help to reduce operating losses. The problem has been studied carefully in the case of the DHP narrow-gauge line, both for its entire length and from Beirut to Rayak. Calculations have shown the cost to be prohibitive.

Electrified railways call for expensive installations and high maintenance costs. Under ordinary circumstances economical operation of such lines requires not only cheap power but a dense traffic pattern. Short hauls and frequent schedules with small units (as in metropolitan suburban service) or high-revenue transport on longer hauls are among the favorable factors sought. Perhaps in time these conditions may develop in appropriate Syrian localities. Within the near future, however, it is unlikely that circumstances in any part of Syria will permit railway electrification on an economic basis.

489 D RAILWAY VS. ROAD DEVELOPMENT

Syria's principal transport problem is how to provide the most efficient and economical method for moving the large volume of goods across northern Syria between Jezireh and Aleppo and Latakia. Since at present neither the existing railway nor the highway systems can cope with this

1963 1964

طول خطوط السكك الحديدية المستعملة في نهاية عام ١٩٥٣ (بالكيلو مترات)

LENGTH OF RAILWAY TRACKS IN USE AS AT THE END OF 1953 (in kms)

Table No. 4

جدول رقم ٤

Railway System	Total Length		Length within Syrian territory		شبكة الخطوط الحديدية
	Narrow gauge خط ضيق	Ordinary gauge خط عادي	Narrow gauge خط ضيق	Ordinary gauge خط عادي	
Damascus Hama Railway Line and Extensions (D.H.P.)	149	439	67	297	سكة حديد شام حماة وتمديداتها (ش ح ت)
The Hijaz Railways (C.F.H.)	240	—	240	—	سكة حديد الحجاز (س ح)
The Northern Railways (N.R.)	—	248	—	248	الخطوط الشمالية (خ ش)
Total	389	687	307	545	المجموع

عدد القاطرات والعربات المستعملة في شبكة خطوط السكك الحديدية في نهاية ١٩٥٣

NUMBER OF LOCOMOTIVES AND WAGONS USED BY THE RAILWAY SYSTEMS, AS AT THE END OF 1953.

Table No. 5

جدول رقم ٥

Locomotives and Wagons	مجموع الخطوط All lines	الخط الضيق Narrow gauge			الخط العادي Ordinary gauge			القاطرات وانواع العربات
		المجموع Total	ش ح ت D.H.P.	س ح C.F.H.	المجموع Total	ش ح ت D.H.P.	خ ش N.R.	
Locomotives	147	62	36	26	85	66	19	قاطرات
Passenger and luggage wagons	190	117	84	33	82	58	24	عربات الركاب وامتعتهم
Goods wagons	1,785	670	343	327	1,125	518	607	شاحنات بضائع
Fuel wagons	100	27	4	23	73	15	58	شاحنات صهاريج
Other wagons	56	8	3	5	48	5	43	عربات اخرى

Source : Ministry of Public Works

المصدر : وزارة الاشغال العامة

3:Royal Institute of International Affairs U-4 (no date)1954 M1 Middle East
LEBANON ME1
SYRIA MD1

refinery is running on imported crude oil at about a quarter of its capacity. There exists an IPC refinery at Tripoli which treats over half a million tons of crude a year (10,000 barrels a day) for the needs of Syria and Lebanon which it cannot fully supply; accordingly, its extension has been under discussion. Construction has begun on a refinery for 7,000 barrels a day at Sidon for Mediterranean Refining Company (California Texas Corporation), but while the Syrian market is still too small to justify the erection of a refinery, the Syrian Government nevertheless wishes to have a refinery established in the country to meet its own needs, and negotiations to this end with IPC and with the World Bank have recently taken place.[1]

Under the Barcelona Convention of 1921 dues are not leviable on transit trade, but the two countries draw, under their agreements with the pipeline companies, a sizable revenue from petroleum apart from the indirect benefits caused by employment by the oil companies. At the time of writing the agreements between the two Governments and the two oil companies are under review but no precise details are available, though the two Governments began by demanding that they should receive jointly a half share of the saving which the companies made by using the pipelines instead of having to transport their oil to the Mediterranean by tanker. Even if this principle were accepted, the difficulty would remain of establishing a satisfactory formula for calculating the saving. The agreement with Tapline is believed to provide Lebanon with about £L4½ million a year. The oil companies bring foreign exchange into Syria and the Lebanon and the currency is surrendered to the Governments at the official rate but can thereafter be resold at the rate applying to the free market which may bring to the Governments a profit of a third. The problem is that Syria and Lebanon are, in fact, not oil-producing states and, although their needs and desires for foreign money may be as great as Iraq's, it is difficult to see how they can expect to obtain from petroleum the same revenue as do the states where it is produced.

Communications

In general, roads provide a cheaper and quicker means of transport than the railways which are mostly running at a loss. The railway lines are:

The Hejaz Railway. A narrow (3 ft 5 in.) gauge track runs from the centre of Damascus to Deraa (88 miles) and thence

[1] See *Petroleum Press Service*, February 1953, p. 53.

3:Royal Institute of International Affairs U-4 (no date)1954 M1 Middle East
Lebanon MEI
Syria MDI

S L 496

into Jordan. There is a branch line from Deraa to Suwaida, but another branch, to Haifa, is out of use.

Damas-Hama et Prolongements. (*a*) From Beirut to Damascus there is a narrow-gauge track running for 91 miles via Rayaq; rack and pinion are used to traverse the mountains, and this slow haul is now employed for freight only. (*b*) From Rayaq to Aleppo there is a 4 ft 8 in. gauge track for 270 miles which passes through Homs and Hama. (*c*) The stretch of the Cairo–Turkey line from Ras an-Naqura on the Lebano–Israel border to Beirut is out of commission but the section of 64 miles in standard gauge from Beirut to Tripoli and Homs is used.

Syrian state Railways. This is the part (164 miles) of the Turkey–Mosul line that runs inside Syrian territory.

S L 491

Roads

Main arterial roads in Lebanon are considered adequate, but the network of secondary and feeder roads is poor. In Syria the road system is generally inadequate, and only the asphalted roads are usable for heavy traffic throughout the year. The following figures give some indication of the position:

Syria, 1951		Lebanon, 1949	
	Miles		*Miles*
1st class, asphalted	2,917	Surfaced	1,811
2nd class, macadamized	1,268	Unimproved	414
Tracks	5,218		

(Sources: *Statesman's Year-Book, 1953*; US Dept. of Commerce.)

S 494

There are over 11,000 vehicles registered in Syria. Trans-desert passenger and goods services to Iraq are in regular use and goods are also moved, including refrigerated vegetables, to Kuwait and Dahran. The authorities are restricting the registration of new lorries to the estimated needs of the countries, but more vehicles are required, particularly diesel lorries for long hauls of heavy loads.

S L 509

Aerodromes. The new airport of Beirut (Khaldeh) receives the Comet, and is beginning to rival Cairo as a gateway to the East, and that of Damascus (Mezzeh) has long been in use by Constellations. Many international airlines stage at Khaldeh or Mezzeh; the approach to Khaldeh is better and, with between twenty and thirty aircraft a day, it has since 1951 outstripped Mezzeh, which has five to ten aircraft a day. For some years plans have been under consideration for moving the Damascus airport to the east of the city. There are two private Lebanese airlines. A national airline in Syria was a financial failure and was taken over by the army. Smaller airfields exist near Tripoli,

874 conducts an experimental farm, and co-
operates with the government in a compre-
hensive educational program.

489 Syria produces a variety of items for ex-
port, the principal products being cereals,
textiles, vegetables, cotton and wool and
135 hides. It is relatively poor in mineral re-
sources, although rich deposits of asphalt
exist in the Nusairiyeh range and salt basins
in Aleppo, Homs and Damascus provinces.
471 Explorations for oil have been made in the
northeast under a concession acquired in
1940 by the Syrian Petroleum Company,
an affiliate of the Iraq Petroleum group.
315 After several years of unsuccessful borings,
651 the concession was relinquished, but the
country derives some income from pipelines
which traverse it, leading from the oil fields
in Iraq and Saudi Arabia to Syrian and
433 Lebanese ports. Industrial development is
slowly emerging from the handicraft stage,
and numerous modern plants for the proc-
essing of local materials have been estab-
lished, primarily in Damascus and Aleppo.
They include the manufacture of textiles,
soaps and oils, cigarettes, various food prod-
ucts, shoes, cement and other consumer
goods. The promotion of industry is handi-
capped, however, by the shortage of raw
materials, labor and cheap sources of power.

441 The cities and the towns of western Syria
are linked with each other and with the ad-
joining territories by a system of motor
roads. Communications in the interior are
poor, and consist in many areas of tracks
505 across the desert. There are no navigable
rivers. Latakia, the chief port, is small, and
steamer traffic with the Mediterranean
countries is at present conducted largely
through Beirut and Tripoli, in Lebanon.
The construction of modern port facilities
at Latakia is scheduled, however, for 1953.
315 Banias has been developed as the terminal
505 of the new pipeline from the Kirkuk oil
fields of the Iraq Petroleum Company to
the Mediterranean. It was completed in
496 1952. Aleppo is connected by railways with
both Beirut and Tripoli, and is an impor-
tant junction on the trunk line from Istan-

63:Simmons et al G-5 (1941-1951) 1984
M1 Middle East
SYRIA MD1

bul to Baghdad. A railroad also runs from Beirut to Damascus via Rayak. A second line from Damascus to Amman and Ma'an, in Jordan, forms part of the so-called "pilgrim" railway, opened in 1904-06. Air services are available from Damascus and, to a lesser extent, from Aleppo to Beirut and Baghdad, thence to Europe, Africa and the Far East.

Food and Nutrition

The nutritional standards of the people vary markedly in different regions, being highest in the vicinity of Damascus and lowest among the Alawites of Latakia province and the peasants of Hauran and Jebel ed Druz. Undernutrition is common, but generally it is more widespread in the rural villages than in the urban areas. Due to the lack of adequate storage and transportation facilities, local food shortages are frequent, particularly during poor crop years. Up to the present, there has been little organized effort to promote better nutrition among the different population groups. It is expected that such a program will be initiated by the nutrition division created within the governmental health services in 1952.

Cereals constitute the staple foods, and, with certain root vegetables, contribute 70 to 80 per cent of the caloric content of the average diet. Breads prepared from wheat flour are consumed in all parts of the country. Barley is sometimes employed, while maize and sorghum millet are used in the southeast. Rice is universally popular: it is grown in the Al Jazira region, and large amounts are also imported. Broad beans, chick-peas and lentils are basic food items in most areas. Other vegetables, including onions, potatoes, beets, tomatoes, eggplant and the leafy spinach and French lettuce, are abundant in Damascus and Al Jazira provinces, but scarce in Hauran and Jebel ed Druz. Numerous fruits are consumed in season, but the supply is scanty in the Euphrates valley and in the southern provinces. Olives and olive oil are important among most population groups. Milk is

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